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merce. Since the construction of the canal England has acquired the majority of the stock, but it is hard to see what especial benefit she derives from this; no more English ships pass through the canal because the English government is the largest stockholder. If the possession of a canal in Nicaragua or Panama were important to us in time of war, we could hold it only while we had more ships and stronger ships than our enemy. To suppose that, in case of war with England, a British fleet of ironclads would despondently turn away from a canal guarded by some stray American gunboats, because it had been constructed with American capital or was under the protection of the American government, shows a lack of familiarity with the usages of warfare.

Whether the canal is built by a future de Lesseps or a future Warner Miller, this country will reap the greatest advantage from its construction. Professor Keasbey gives a full account of the long record of failure in the past; but, notwithstanding this, he is justly confident that in the present condition of science and commercial development the completion of a canal will not be long postponed. The work done at Panama has been the only serious attempt at construction, and the failure of that undertaking need not discourage other projectors. Over two hundred and fifty million dollars were spent there, and the canal is far from completion; but as one-third of the amount was stolen, one-third was wasted and only one-third was spent on the work, this does not show that the cost of cutting through the isthmus will necessarily reach an impossible sum. The account of the Panama scheme and of the manipulations, not to say the machinations, of de Lesseps is the most interesting chapter in this book. A few errors have been allowed to creep in, and de Lesseps is made to say that American opposition was due to envy of "*la gloire Française*." The great projector was often wrong in his engineering, and still more often wrong in his facts, but his French was always correct.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

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*William Henry Seward.* By THORNTON KIRKLAND LOTHROP. (American Statesmen Series.) Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1896. — 436 pp.

The present work should be judged by the purpose with which it was written. It exhibits in a compact and somewhat popular form the life of the person of whom it treats, and his relations to the times

in which he lived. To this mode of treatment the life of Seward does not readily yield. As the result of a certain vivacity and resourcefulness of temper, his name is associated with questions rather than identified with them; and the number of important events with which he was connected is so considerable, and the precise part he played in some of them is as yet so indeterminate, that his career invites investigation and discussion rather than narration. The present work does not attempt to clear up doubtful questions by new evidence. On the other hand, it presents a fair summary of that which has already been disclosed.

The fact that Mr. Seward was, as Mr. Lothrop states, "charged with having no political convictions," is due to the combination of traits that caused him at times to propose courses of action which seemed to others to be irrational. There were occasions on which he exhibited impulsiveness and lack of self-restraint. An example of this may be found in his memorandum to President Lincoln of April 1, 1861, in which he suggested a probable declaration of war against two European powers, a possible declaration against two more, and the rousing in Canada, Mexico and Central America of "a vigorous continental spirit of independence" against "European intervention," as a remedy for the political ills of the United States. It would be difficult to believe that such advice was given seriously, if there had been any object to gain by a lack of seriousness. But there was none.

Mr. Seward held the office of secretary of state through eight long and eventful years, and he was required to deal with many difficult questions. It would be impossible, in the limits of a review, to discuss his career in that office. That on many occasions he exhibited great skill is generally conceded. His industry was remarkable; and it is curiously attested by hundreds of memoranda written hurriedly in pencil across the face of dispatches, showing to how great an extent he personally directed the work of his department. Mr. Lothrop states that he remained in the cabinet after President Lincoln's death, "not so much to take part in the process of reconstruction as because he wished to dispose of the diplomatic questions which the war had left unsettled, and thus to finish his work." In this opinion I am inclined to concur. It doubtless was the wish to which Mr. Lothrop has adverted that led him, in 1868, to undertake the settlement of the Alabama claims. Mr. Lothrop goes very far, however, in saying that the Johnson-Clarendon convention "gave to the United States, in substance, all that it got by the Treaty of Wash-

ington." The Johnson-Clarendon convention and the Treaty of Washington were very different instruments, not in form only, but also in substance. They were about as unlike as two treaties of arbitration could be.

J. B. MOORE.

*Harvard Historical Studies.* Vol. I: The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America. By W. E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS, Ph.D., 335 pp. Vol. II: The Contest over the Ratification of the Federal Constitution in the State of Massachusetts. By SAMUEL BANNISTER HARDING, A.M., 194 pp. Vol. III: A Critical Study of Nullification in South Carolina. By DAVID FRANKLIN HOUSTON, A.M., ix, 169 pp.—New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1896.

The series of historical monographs, of which these volumes are the first installment, appears in unusually attractive form. The publishers, so far as their art could go, have left little to be desired. The plan of the series is also very comprehensive. It will include studies in European as well as American history, besides collections of documents, reprints and bibliographies. An enterprise planned and conducted as this promises to be, must be widely useful in making accessible material for history and in furnishing an avenue for the publication of thorough studies on special topics.

The volume of Mr. Du Bois on the *Suppression of the Slave-Trade* fittingly introduces the series, and in a way indicates what the character of the monographic material in it is likely to be. The volume is a thorough and painstaking study of the efforts made by the American colonies, and by the commonwealths and federal government subsequent to the Revolution, to restrict or abolish the traffic in slaves, of the obstacles which these efforts met with and of their failure until the traffic was swept away in the war which had as one of its results the abolition of slavery itself. The material is well arranged and clearly set forth. Statements throughout are carefully fortified by the citation of authorities. By treating the colonies under the classes of planting, farming and trading colonies, the economic cause of the origin of slavery and of the persistence of the slave-trade in the South is sufficiently indicated. At the same time the reason why the restrictive legislation of those colonies and the humanitarian enthusiasm of the early Revolution were not strong enough to stop the trade is clearly shown. The history of the compromise of 1787, by which for twenty years the control of the traffic was left almost